Writing a Fact Sheet 101

The “X-Files”

UW Garden Facts
- UW-Extension Hort Team
- Design
  - Short/Concise
  - Easy-to-Read
  - Customizable
- Topics
  - Diseases
  - Insects
  - General Horticulture/Weeds

Select a Topic
- Enhance your programming
- Increase your efficiency
- Provide relevant content for colleagues
- Respond to a new, critical needs
- Provide an opportunity to learn
- Promote a topic that is just plain COOL!

Create a Format
- Create a visual format
  - Create a “brand”
  - Keep things simple
  - Make things visually pleasing
  - Conform to UW-Madison guidelines
    - Color palette (https://brand.wisc.edu/)
    - Logo (https://brand.wisc.edu/)
    - Copyright and other standard verbiage
      (https://universityrelations.wisc.edu/policies-and-guidelines/)
- Create a content format
  - Cover pertinent information
    - Text
    - Photos or other graphics
  - Tell a logical story
  - Make content accessible to your audience
  - Allow adaptability to a variety of topics
  - Be consistent, but not set in stone
Writing a Fact Sheet 101
Create a Format

Writing a Fact Sheet 101
Research Your Topic

• Collect pertinent information
  • Consult refereed journal articles
  • Visit https://www.library.wisc.edu/
  • Search databases
    (AGRICOLA, Biological Abstracts)
  • Read existing Extension publications
  • Ask an expert
  • Read non-research-based information
  • Make a bibliography/reference list

Writing a Fact Sheet 101
Write and Refine

• Get something on the page
• Organize and consolidate
• Simplify and clarify language
  (but don’t overdo it)
• Eliminate “fat” (but don’t overdo it)
• Find (and document) appropriate visuals
• Rest and revisit

Writing a Fact Sheet 101
Review and Rewrite

• Solicit reviews
  • Content accuracy
  • Readability
  • Portability
• Expect to be upset
• Rest and revisit
• Make revisions as needed

Writing a Fact Sheet 101
Advertise and Distribute

• Provide electronically
  • Websites
  • CDs/Thumb drives
  • Listservs
  • Social media
• Provide hard copies
  • Trade shows
  • Presentations

Writing a Fact Sheet 101
Think Towards the Future

• Plan regular reviews
• Revise as new information arises
• Scrap obsolete titles
• Plan for continuity
Writing a Fact Sheet 101
Ask for Help

Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic
Department of Plant Pathology
University of Wisconsin-Madison
1630 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706-1598
(608) 262-2863
pddc@wisc.edu
https://pddc.wisc.edu
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